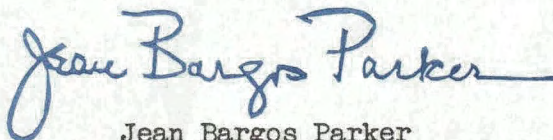


# LIFE

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Jean Burgos Parker  
For the Editors



**LIFE**

*The  
First Lady*

SHE TELLS  
HER PLANS  
FOR THE  
WHITE  
HOUSE



SEPTEMBER 1 • 1961 • 20¢





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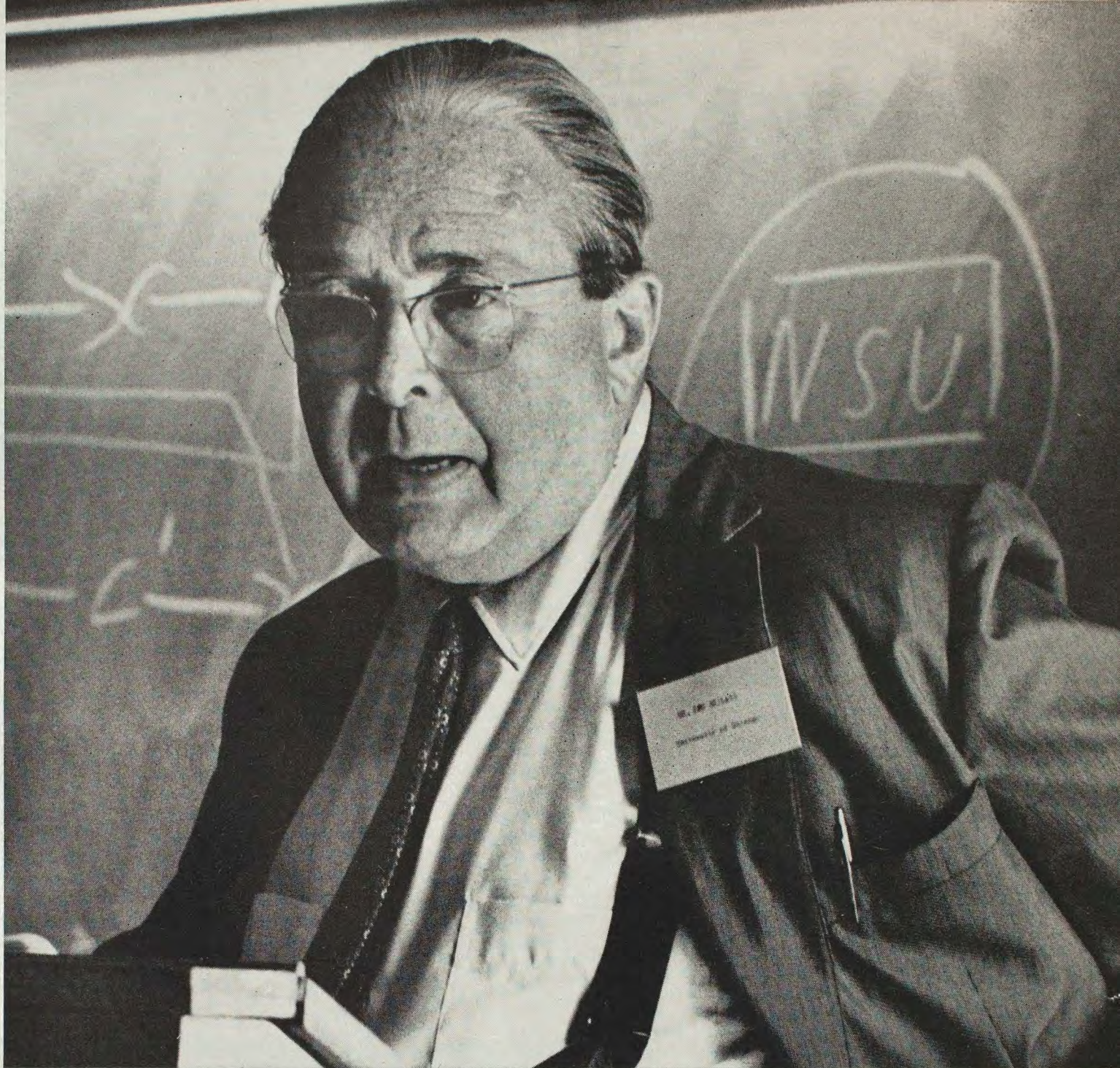


## PICTURE OF THE WEEK

The tiny Texans put on a brave front  
until they escaped to the privacy of  
their dugout. Then they couldn't hold  
out any longer. Knuckles and hands  
went up to brush away tears of defeat



CLOSE-UP



# 'I'm looking for a market for wisdom'

As chairman of a biology conference, Szilard gets into an argument over a theory of cell genetics.

*"A scientist's aim in a discussion with his colleagues is not to persuade, but to clarify."*

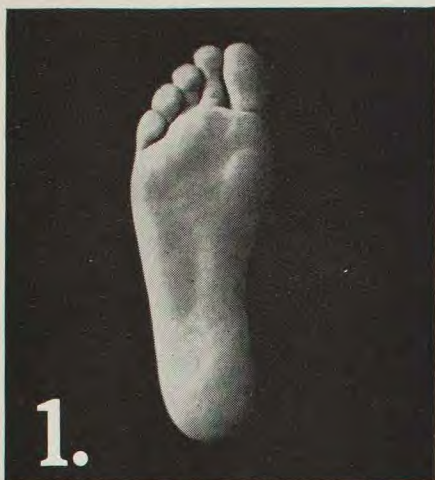
LEO SZILARD  
*Scientist*



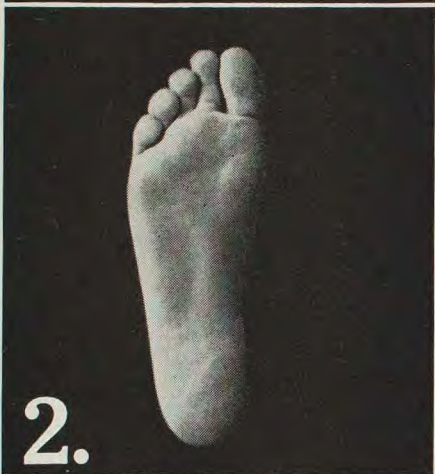
This remark was made by a man who has a good deal of the commodity to sell—and, in marketing his own wisdom, he has served as a mighty human catalyst, in science and in politics. Leo Szilard invented (but did not patent) the cyclotron, wrote a pioneer paper on a theory that ushered in the era of automation, first conceived (but again did not patent) the electron microscope, first recognized the possibility—and proved experimentally the feasibility—of a nuclear chain reaction. A Hungarian, Szilard came to the U.S. in 1938. A year later, by means of a letter he induced Albert Einstein to sign, he goaded President Roosevelt into starting work on the A-bomb. Since the bomb became reality, he has been tirelessly prodding the world not to use it.

Now 63, Szilard lives in Washington, pursuing a new career in molecular biology and traveling about the city (*left*) badgering his friends in government to buy his brand of political wisdom. "The most important step in getting a job done," he observes, "is the recognition of a problem. Once I recognize a problem I usually can think of someone who can work it out better than I could."

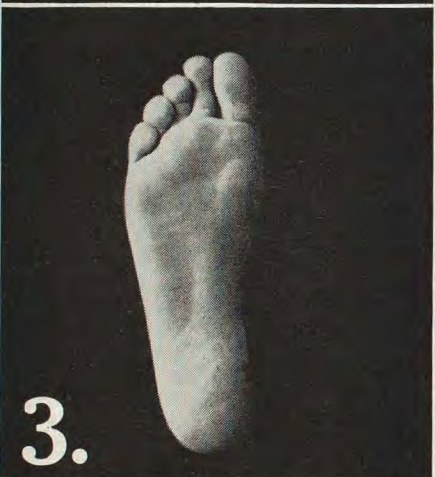




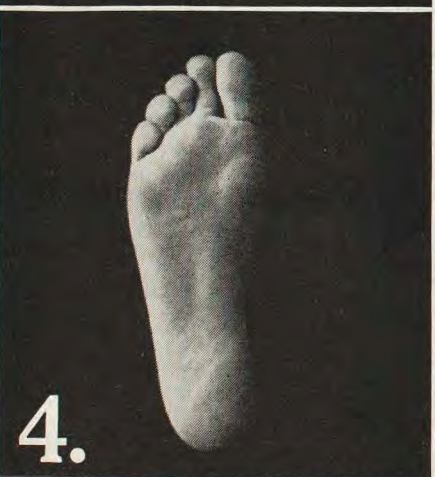
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IN CANADA, TOO



At the Virginia home of Michael Straight (second from left), Szilard holds forth on a favorite topic—disarmament.

“Before we or the Russians know if we really want disarmament, we must figure out how to secure peace even in a disarmed world.”

## A New Book, a New Career

Szilard often dispenses his wisdom in the form of wit. His recently published political testament is in the form of a satirical, occasionally hilarious science-fiction paperback called *The Voice of the Dolphins*. In it some wise mammals coerce humanity into its reluctant salvation through planned, step-by-step disarmament with a cash bonus.

Szilard is a disputatious, free-spirited man whose “Szilardisms” (see p. 79) amuse and sometimes scandalize his friends. When notified that he had won the 1960 Einstein award and his wife told him that the roster of previous winners was pretty impressive, he said:

“Yes, and it is getting better and better.”

At the time, he was in a New York hospital bed, apparently dying of cancer. But he made a remarkable recovery and is now as active as ever. He regrets his age only because, he says, “one is never again as intelligent in life as one is at 16.” Still, he believes, “in order to succeed it is not necessary to be much cleverer than other people. All you have to do is be one day ahead of them.” He thinks that for all he has done in physics, he may be best remembered for his two recent major biological theories—“that it will take my colleagues at least 15 years to prove wrong.”



At his current home, the DuPont Plaza Hotel in Washington, Szilard reads his mail in his favorite working place—the hotel lobby.

“I can work very happily in this lobby. I have never owned a house, and don't feel the need of owning one.”





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SZILARD CONTINUED

## Some Szilardisms on War, Fame, Peace

From past remarks, writings and statements to LIFE reporters, the following cross-section of Dr. Szilard's views is presented.

► On Nuclear Discussions: "It is not necessary to succeed in order to persevere. As long as there is a margin of hope, however narrow, we have no choice but to base all our actions on that margin. America and Russia have one interest in common which may override all their other interests: to be able to live with the bomb without getting into an all-out war that neither of them wants."

► On his crucial fission experiment in 1939: "All we had to do was lean back, turn a switch and watch the screen of a television tube. If flashes of light appeared on the screen it would mean that the liberation of atomic energy would take place in our lifetime. We turned the switch, saw the flashes—we watched for about five minutes—then we switched everything off and went home. That night I knew the world was headed for trouble."

► On Credit and Fame: "In life you must often choose between getting a job done or getting credit for it. In science, the important thing is not the ideas you have but the decision which ones you choose to pursue. If you have an idea and are not going to do anything with it, why spoil someone else's fun by publishing it?"

► On Predictions: "Science is progressing at such a rapid rate that when you make a prediction and think you are ahead of your time by 100 years you may be ahead of your time by 10 at most."

► On the Space Race: "I have mixed feelings about our spending \$20 billion to get to the moon first. But if we are caught in a conflict of prestige with the Russians, I'd rather have it centered around the moon than Laos, Cuba or Berlin."

► On Democracy and Education: "I'm all in favor of the democratic principle that one idiot is as good as one genius, but I draw the line when someone takes the next step and concludes that two idiots are better than one genius."



With his wife Gertrud, an M.D. who is her husband's physician, Szilard last summer dictated a book in his hospital room.



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